

Rules of Seireigi

A SHOGI (JAPANESE CHESS) VARIANT

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Rules of Seireigi

Table of Contents

General Administrative Details	2
Equipment.....	2
Introduction	2
Initial Setup	3
Piece Legend	4
Gameplay	5
Deciding who moves first.....	5
Movement.....	5
Movement Diagrams.....	5
Unpromoted Pieces.....	6
Promoted Pieces	7
Promotion	7
Drops	8
Check.....	8
Perpetual Check	8
Illegal Move.....	9
End of the game	9
Checkmate and Stalemate	9
Resignation.....	9
Draw	9

Rules of Seireigi

General Administrative Details

- Number of Players: 2
- Suggested Age Range: 6+
- Setup Time: <2 minutes
- Playing Time: 30-120 minutes on average

Equipment

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 9x9 Shogi board• 1 Piece box (Box and lid)• 2 Kings (1 Black, 1 White)• 2 Rooks• 2 Bishops• 4 Gold Generals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 Silver Generals• 4 Knights• 4 Lances• 18 Pawns• 1 Rulebook
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Introduction

Seireigi (精霊棋 *seireigi*, "spirit's game") is a two-player abstract strategy game played on a game board with 81 squares arranged in a 9x9 grid. The squares are undifferentiated by marking or color. Each player begins with 20 pieces of 8 different types. They are, in order of decreasing value:

- 1 King
- 1 Rook
- 1 Bishop
- 2 Gold Generals
- 2 Silver Generals
- 2 Knights
- 2 Lances
- 9 Pawns

Except for the Kings, opposing pieces are undifferentiated by marking or color. Pieces face *forward* by having the pointed side of each piece oriented toward the opponent's side – this shows who controls the piece during play.

The object of the game is to capture the opponent's King. To this end, a player's pieces are used to attack the opponent's pieces while supporting each other. In addition to capture the opponent's King, the game can be won by voluntary resignation, and there are two ways that a game can end in a draw.

Rules of Seireigi

Initial Setup

Seireigi is played on a square board of nine rows (called *ranks* and denoted with numbers 九 to 一 or letters *i* to *a*) and nine columns (called *files* and denoted with numbers 9 to 1). The squares are undifferentiated by marking or color. The players are referred to as *Sente* (先手 *Black*) and *Gote* (後手 *White*), respectively. Pieces face *forward* by having the pointed side of each piece oriented toward the opponent's side – this shows who controls the piece during play. The pieces are placed on the board as shown in the following diagram. Pieces at the top face the bottom of the board and are owned by *Gote* (後手 *White*), and vice versa.

後手	歩兵	香車	桂馬	銀將	金將	角行	飛車
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
香車	桂馬	銀將	金將	王將	金將	銀將	桂馬	香車	一/a
	飛車						角行		二/b
歩兵	歩兵	歩兵	歩兵	歩兵	歩兵	歩兵	歩兵	歩兵	三/c
									四/d
									五/e
									六/f
歩兵	歩兵	歩兵	歩兵	歩兵	歩兵	歩兵	歩兵	歩兵	七/g
	角行						飛車		八/h
香車	桂馬	銀將	金將	玉將	金將	銀將	桂馬	香車	九/i

先手	歩兵	香車	桂馬	銀將	金將	角行	飛車
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Rules of Seireigi

Piece Legend

Piece	Full Name		Abbreviation		Romaji	Symbol	Promotes to
	Kanji	Shogi*	Kanji	Shogi*			
King (White)	王将	—	王	—	<i>ōshō</i>	K	—
King (Black)	玉将	—	玉	—	<i>gyokushō</i>	K	—
Rook	飛車	—	飛	—	<i>hisha</i>	R	Dragon King
Dragon King	龍王/ 竜王	—	龍/竜	—	<i>ryūō</i>	+R	promoted Rook
Bishop	角行	—	角	—	<i>kakugyō</i>	B	Dragon Horse
Dragon Horse	龍馬/ 竜馬	—	馬	—	<i>ryūma</i>	+B	promoted Bishop
Gold General	金将	—	金	—	<i>kinshō</i>	G	Great Elephant
Great Elephant	大象	□ †	象	□ †	<i>taizō</i>	+G	promoted Gold General
Silver General	銀将	—	銀	—	<i>ginshō</i>	S	Running Wolf
Running Wolf	走狼	成銀	狼	全	<i>sōrō</i>	+S	promoted Silver General
Knight	桂馬	—	桂	—	<i>keima</i>	N	Heavenly Horse
Heavenly Horse	天馬	成桂	天	圭/今	<i>temma</i>	+N	promoted Knight
Lance	香車	—	香	—	<i>kyōsha</i>	L	Great Tiger
Free Tiger	奔虎	成香	虎	杏/全	<i>honko</i>	+L	promoted Lance
Pawn	歩兵	—	歩	—	<i>fuhyō</i>	P	Tokin
Tokin	と金	—	と/个	—	<i>token</i>	+P	promoted Pawn

*This is the name used in standard Shogi sets, if it is different from the name in the corresponding Kanji field.

† In standard Shogi, Gold Generals do not promote, and thus their reverse sides are blank. This is represented in this document by the white Shogi piece character (□).

Rules of Seireigi

Gameplay

Deciding who moves first

A *furigoma* (振り駒 *piece toss*) is used to decide who moves first. One of the players tosses five Pawns. If the number of Tokins (promoted Pawns, と) facing up is higher than unpromoted Pawns (歩), then the player who tossed the Pawns plays *Gote* (後手 *White*) (that is, getting the second move).

The players may also decide who goes first through a game of chance or a mutual agreement.

Sente (先手 *Black*) moves first, then players alternate making a move. Making a move is required – skipping a move is illegal, even when having to move is detrimental. Play continues until a King is captured, a player resigns, or a draw is declared.

Movement

Each piece moves in a unique manner. A piece moves to empty square except when capturing an opponent's piece. A piece is captured when an attacking enemy piece replaces it on its square. Captured pieces are retained in the capturing player's hand and can be returned to the board on a later turn. Players may never capture their own pieces. Only one piece can be moved per turn.

The table below describes the different types of movement patterns a piece might have. Unless stated differently, the move cannot jump over other pieces and can be either to an empty square or to a space occupied by an enemy piece.

Notation	
○	Steps to an adjacent square.
☆	Jumps to a non-adjacent square, bypassing any intervening piece.
	Ranges along a straight line, crossing any number of empty squares. Must stop upon capture.
—	
↘	
↗	

Piece 駒 <i>koma</i>				
↘	☆		☆	↗
☆	○	○	○	☆
—	○	駒	○	—
☆	○	○	○	☆
↗	☆		☆	↘
Alternate Names				
Promotion				

Movement Diagrams

The following diagrams show the moves of the pieces. The white pieces move like the black pieces, but in the opposite direction. Each diagram is organized like the one above.

Rules of Seireigi

Unpromoted Pieces

(Gote) King 王将 <i>ōshō</i>				
	○	○	○	
	○	王	○	
	○	○	○	
—				
—				

(Sente) King 玉将 <i>gyokushō</i>				
	○	○	○	
	○	玉	○	
	○	○	○	
—				
—				

Rook 飛車 <i>hisha</i>				
—	—	飛	—	—
—				
Dragon King 龍王 <i>ryūō</i>				

Bishop 角行 <i>kakugyō</i>				
↖				↗
	↖		↗	
		角		
	↗		↖	
↗				↖
—				
Dragon Horse 龍馬 <i>ryūma</i>				

Gold General 金将 <i>kinshō</i>				
	○	○	○	
	○	金	○	
		○		
—				
Great Elephant 大象 <i>taizō</i>				

Silver General 銀将 <i>ginshō</i>				
	○	○	○	
		銀		
	○		○	
—				
Running Wolf 走狼 <i>sōrō</i>				

Knight 桂馬 <i>keima</i>				
	☆		☆	
		桂		
—				
Heavenly Horse 天馬 <i>temma</i>				

Lance 香車 <i>kyōsha</i>				
		香		
—				
Free Tiger 奔虎 <i>honko</i>				

Pawn 歩兵 <i>fuhyō</i>				
		○		
		歩		
—				
Token と金 <i>token</i>				

Rules of Seireigi

Promoted Pieces

Dragon King 龍王 <i>ryūō</i>	Dragon Horse 龍馬 <i>ryūma</i>	Great Elephant 大象 <i>taizō</i>	Running Wolf 走狼 <i>sōrō</i>
竜王, 竜	竜馬		成銀, 全
(Promoted Rook 龍車 <i>hisha</i>)	(Promoted Bishop 角行 <i>kakugyō</i>)	(Promoted Gold General 金將 <i>kinshō</i>)	(Promoted Silver General 銀將 <i>ginshō</i>)

Heavenly Horse 天馬 <i>temma</i>	Free Tiger 奔虎 <i>honko</i>	Tokin と金 <i>tokin</i>
成桂, 圭, 今	成香, 杏, 全	个
(Promoted Knight 桂馬 <i>keima</i>)	(Promoted Lance 香車 <i>kyōsha</i>)	(Promoted Pawn 歩兵 <i>fuhyō</i>)

Promotion

A player's promotion zone consists of the farthest three ranks of the board – the three ranks occupied by the opponent's pieces at setup. The zone is typically delineated on the game board by two inscribed dots. When a piece is moved, if part of the piece's path lies within the promotion zone (that is, if the piece moves into, out of, or wholly within the zone, but not if it is dropped into the zone), then the player has the option to promote the piece at the end of the turn. Promotion is indicated by turning the piece over after it moves, revealing the character of the promoted piece.

A piece must promote if it would otherwise have no legal moves on subsequent turns. This applies to Pawns and Lances on the farthest rank, and to Knights on the farthest two ranks.

The King does not promote, nor can already promoted pieces promote further.

Rules of Seireigi

Drops

Captured pieces are retained in the capturing player's hand and can be brought back into play under the capturing player's control. On any turn, instead of moving a piece on the board, a player may select a piece in hand and place it – unpromoted side up and facing the opposing side – on any empty square. The piece is then one of that player's active pieces on the board and can be moved accordingly. This is called dropping the piece, or simply, a drop. A drop counts as a complete move.

It is illegal to hide pieces from full view.

A drop cannot capture a piece, nor does dropping within the promotion zone result in immediate promotion. Capture and/or promotion may occur normally, however, on subsequent moves of the piece.

A piece cannot be dropped onto a space where it would have no legal moves on subsequent turns. Thus, Pawns and Lances may not be dropped onto the farthest rank, and Knights may not be dropped on either of the two farthest ranks.

There are two additional restrictions when dropping Pawns:

- **Two Pawns (二歩 *nifu*)** - A Pawn cannot be dropped onto a file (column) containing another unpromoted Pawn of the same player (promoted Pawns do not count).
- **Drop Pawn Mate (打ち歩詰め *uchifudzume*)** - A Pawn cannot be dropped to give an immediate checkmate. (This rule only applies specifically to Pawns, drops, *and* checkmates – to clarify, a player *may* deliver an immediate checkmate by dropping a non-Pawn piece, a player *may* checkmate a King with a Pawn that is already on the board, and a Pawn *may* be dropped to give an immediate check as long as it does not also result in checkmate.)

Check

When a player's King is under immediate attack by at least one enemy piece, it is in check. A player whose King is in check must remove the check if possible. This can be done in one of three ways, depending on the situation:

- Blocking the check by placing a piece in between the King and the attacking piece
- Capturing the attacking piece
- Moving the King to a safe square

It is illegal to make a move that places or leaves a King in check. If it is not possible to get out of check, the King is checkmated and the game is effectively over.

Perpetual Check

If a player repeats the board position four times (see Draw > Repetition Draw) via a continuous and unending series of checks, this is known as perpetual check. Perpetual check results in a loss for the checking player.

Rules of Seireigi

Illegal Move

A player who makes an illegal move loses immediately. An illegal move is any move that violates the rules of the game. The loss stands even if play continued and the move was discovered later in game. However, if neither the opponent nor a third party points out the illegal move and the opponent later resigns, the resignation stands as the result. This rule may be relaxed in casual games, where a player can take back the illegal move and make a legal move.

Illegal moves include, but are not limited to:

- Violating the Two Pawns (nifu) restriction
- Violating the Drop Pawn Mate (uchifudzume) restriction
- Dropping a piece onto a space where it cannot move
- Dropping a piece with its promoted value
- Not promoting a piece after moving it to a space where it cannot move
- Playing out of turn
- Leaving one's King in check, or moving into check
- Giving perpetual check
- Moving a piece contrary to how its movements are defined

End of the game

A player who captures the opponent's King wins the game.

Checkmate and Stalemate

If a player has no legal moves that will allow their King to remain out of check, that player is mated. Mate results in a loss for the mated player. A mate where the mated King is in check is known as a checkmate, and one where the mated King is not in check is known as a stalemate.

Resignation

At any point in the game, a player may resign and their opponent wins the game.

Draw

There are only two ways for a draw to occur - 千日手 *sennichite* (repetition) and impasse 持精靈棋 *jiseireigi*.

- **Repetition Draw 千日手 *sennichite*** - If the same game position occurs four times with the same player to move and the same pieces in hand for each player, then the game ends in a draw, as long as the repeated positions are not due to perpetual check.
- **Impasse 持精靈棋 *jiseireigi*** - If both players have advanced their Kings into their respective promotion zones and neither can hope to make any progress, the game reaches an impasse, which may result in either a win or a draw. If this happens and both players agree to an impasse, the winner is decided as follows: each Rook or Bishop, promoted or not, scores 5 points for the owning player, and all other pieces except Kings score 1 point each. If a player scores fewer than 24 points, that player loses; otherwise, the game ends in a draw.